

national security is at stake. Americans deserve answers.

Did the President or others know or direct Flynn's secret communications with Russia?

Why did the White House sit on its hands for weeks, even after being told its National Security Adviser could have been compromised?

Were Trump campaign officials colluding with Russians?

These are questions that the American people deserve answers to. We need a bipartisan, independent commission to examine these questions. The credibility of our government is at stake. Congress must act.

VOTERS TRUST TRUMP, NOT THE MEDIA

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, despite the saturation of negative media coverage of President Trump, the people have spoken. A recent poll found that President Trump is thought more trustworthy than the news media.

The administration is considered truthful by 49 percent of registered voters, but the media is less trusted than the administration, with only 39 percent finding it honest. So President Trump is more credible than the liberal national media.

That is no surprise. If the media wants to increase their credibility, they should report the news fairly, objectively, and without malice.

INHUMANE HUNTING TECHNIQUES ON WILDLIFE REFUGES IN ALASKA

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, so far, in 2017, Donald Trump and the Republicans have targeted women, immigrants, and health care. Now they are setting their sights on bear cubs, wolves, and coyotes.

Republicans, in cahoots with the gun lobby and with trophy hunters, want to eliminate a rule that currently prohibits hunters from using brutal means to kill our majestic animals in Alaska's 16 wildlife refuges.

This rule prevents snaring and trapping bears, including cubs, hunting wolves in their dens, and shooting bears from helicopters, among other methods.

Now, those opposed to the rule say that it hurts Alaska's economy, but there is no evidence of that. In fact, big game hunting represents only 2 percent of wildlife-related recreation on our national wildlife refuges.

Meanwhile, the National Park Service has estimated that wildlife watchers, those who go to see wildlife, not to shoot them, contribute \$1 billion to the State's economy.

I ask you: Is a trophy on the wall really worth it?

So please vote "no" on H.J. Res. 69 introduced by our colleague, Mr. YOUNG.

□ 1215

GENERAL MICHAEL FLYNN'S RESIGNATION

(Mr. HUFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for a nonpartisan, independent commission to immediately and thoroughly examine the influence in the 2016 election and at the Trump White House of the Russian Government. This House should have begun this critical oversight work immediately and served as a check on the White House to protect the American people, but it has failed to do so.

The resignation of General Michael Flynn has raised far more questions than it answered, and it is not acceptable to simply sit on our hands or to say that somehow the only problem is the leaks that exposed this misconduct and not the misconduct itself. That won't cut it.

The American people deserve to know the full picture of Russia's involvement in the election, of General Flynn's communication with Russian officials, and why President Trump took no action for weeks after learning of General Flynn's misconduct.

Unfortunately, this administration's idea of transparency is conducting sensitive national security discussions in the middle of a crowded Mar-a-Lago dining room in full view of his wealthy patrons. The American people deserve better. They deserve an independent, nonpartisan commission, and it is time for this House to do its job.

POTENTIAL CRIMES AND COVERUPS

(Mr. JEFFRIES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump poses the greatest Presidential threat to our democracy since Richard Nixon. It is about the potential crimes and the potential coverup. Seventeen different intelligence agencies have concluded that the Russians interfered with the election in order to help Donald Trump. Top Trump cronies like Carter Page, Paul Manafort, and Michael Flynn all had regular communications with high-level Russian intelligence agents at the same time they were engaging in hacking.

The National Security Adviser resigned in disgrace because of illegal communication with the Russian Ambassador. The President refuses to denounce Vladimir Putin and continues to try to make Russia great again.

Connect the dots. It is time for House Republicans to do their job and put

country ahead of party. Join us in a bipartisan investigation of the White House. What did the President know, and when did he know it?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The Chair would remind Members to avoid improper references to the President.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the many veterans and the work that Congress is doing to support and represent them on the House floor this week. These are the heroes who keep us safe and secure each and every day.

This week, this body passed a few important bills to streamline access to care for veterans as well as provide new and better opportunities for veteran-owned businesses and veterans seeking employment.

Last month, the unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans increased to 6.3 percent, marking the fourth time in the last 7 months that group's percentage has been higher than the overall veteran unemployment rate. That means that about 211,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are still looking for work. That is 211,000 too many.

That is why one of the bills we passed this week establishes a Federal program recognizing private businesses that employ veterans and engage in community service to help our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, helping our Nation's veterans who have sacrificed so much for us is a critical priority and remains one of the most important objectives of this Congress. I will continue to use my time and effort to fight for every opportunity to support them when they return home to give them the hero's welcome they deserve.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 15, 2017, at 9:19 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 255.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 321.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO SCRUTINIZE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the growing number of executive orders issued by President Trump and the silence from our House majority.

President Trump has signed 12 executive orders in the first 5 weeks in office. Many, like the border wall, the Muslim ban, and the ACA sabotage order, are highly misguided and exceed the intent of the law.

Congress has a constitutional duty to oversee and investigate the actions of the Executive. To date the House majority has said little and taken no action to oversee the Trump administration's abuse of power through executive orders.

When President Obama sat in the White House, the House majority called his administration every name under the sun. Agencies were closely scrutinized. Federal officials were regularly subject to hostile questioning.

Where is the oversight, Mr. Speaker? Where is the criticism? What happened to limiting executive power?

I hope my colleagues in the majority will uphold Congress' constitutional duties and vigorously scrutinize President Trump's actions and mounting abuse of power.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 43, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 69, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE OF DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 17, 2017, THROUGH FEBRUARY 24, 2017

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 123 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 123

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 43) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients. All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except:

(1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 69) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska". All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. On any legislative day during the period from February 17, 2017, through February 24, 2017—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 4. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 3 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), the ranking member of the Rules Committee, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 123 provides for a rule to consider two Congressional Review Act resolutions which will undo burdensome and harmful regulations put into place by the Obama administration during the final hours of his Presidency. The rule brings before the House these resolutions so that Congress may remove, through the proper legislative process, rules promulgated by bureaucrats who remain unaccountable to the American people. This process allows those who are accountable—the elected Representatives in the Congress—to fight for their constituents' rights and liberties.

House Resolution 123 provides for a closed rule for each of the Congress-

sional Review Act resolutions, both H.J. Res. 43 and H.J. Res. 69, the standard procedure for such resolutions, since the sole purpose of each is to remove a harmful regulation from the Federal Register.

The rule allows for 1 hour of debate, equally divided between the majority and the minority leader or their designees, for H.J. Res. 43, and 1 hour of debate, equally divided between the Chair and the ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources, for H.J. Res. 69. On each resolution contained in the rule, the minority is afforded the customary motion to recommit.

H.J. Res. 43 is a joint resolution which would repeal the Obama administration's midnight rule that takes away States' ability to direct funding within their own borders to certain healthcare providers that conform to the States' values.

In her final days in office, Secretary Mathews Burwell pushed forward a rule that would require States to fund, with public dollars, facilities that perform abortions, potentially against the will of the people of that given State. This flies in the face of the 10th Amendment which grants to States the authority to make such decisions within their borders and to prioritize which healthcare providers should receive funding based on the greatest need in their own communities.

Those of us who care about the carefully crafted Federal system which our Founding Fathers set up, which allows different States to operate differently based upon their own values and priorities, recognize the Obama rule for what it is: a power grab by the Federal Government. This is why the House will take up this resolution today—to continue to fight for states' rights—and will repeal this burdensome regulation that ties the hands of every State legislature and ties the hands of every Governor in the Nation.

H.J. Res. 69 is a Congressional Review Act resolution to repeal an overreaching regulation by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service which usurps Alaska's ability to manage its own lands within its own borders. Federal law has long recognized that Alaska—that Alaska—and her elected officials are in the best position to make the decisions on what actions to permit on the public lands in that State, whether those lands are Federal, State, or private.

Despite this long precedent, codified by Congress in the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act, the Obama administration moved forward in its waning days with a rule that imposes Federal restrictions on lands that have been, up until the end of the Obama administration, successfully regulated by the State of Alaska. Like H.J. Res. 43, this resolution recognizes the important 10th Amendment protections put in place by the Founding Fathers in our Constitution which protects states' rights to govern within their own borders.